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Chairman: Mr. Swe ..... (Myanmar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 77: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

1. **The Chairman** recalled that in its resolution 54/81 of 6 December 1999 the General Assembly had decided to keep the present item open during its fifty-fourth session. That had been the first time that the Special Political and Decolonization Committee had not concluded consideration of the peacekeeping item during the usual September-to-December period set aside for consideration of the agenda items assigned to the Main Committees. It had subsequently taken up the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in May 2000.

2. Since then, the Assembly had continued to consider the item twice in the course of each session. Thus, at its preceding session the Fourth Committee had considered the peacekeeping item in October 2003 and again in June 2004, when it had taken up, among other matters, the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/58/19), including its proposals, recommendations and conclusions.

3. It should also be noted that in 2003, in accordance with the decision contained in document A/54/87, which had subsequently been endorsed by the Assembly, the Committee had considered the item from 15 to 20 October and had held an interactive dialogue with the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and his colleagues.

4. Given the vital importance of peacekeeping operations for all the Member States and the significant developments in the field since the Committee's preceding session, he proposed to invite the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations to provide information on the current trends and prospects in peacekeeping.

5. **Mr. Guéhenno** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the peacekeeping work of the United Nations was again at a crossroads and that the Committee's current session offered a fine opportunity for discussing the way ahead. Four years earlier the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) had also stood at a historic crossroads. That had been the start of the process of implementing the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report, which had marked a milestone in the effort to ensure that the lessons of the 1990s and the future challenges facing the Department were addressed. Much work had been done in 2001 to strengthen the Department's staff, as a result of which it had secured the human resources needed for proper support of its field missions. Attention had been focused in 2002 on the problems of rapid deployment. The strategic deployment stocks and pre-mandate commitment authority had come into existence. Without those significant innovations the Department would not have been able to deploy the new missions over the past year. Closer attention had also been given to the question of supporting the rule of law in the context of the peacekeeping efforts. Real progress had been made in that area as well, expressed in the formulation of a common vision of the way forward.

6. Coordination between DPKO and regional organizations had been stepped up in 2003. The fruits of those efforts could be seen in the Joint Declaration of the United Nations and the European Union and in the continuing cooperation between DPKO and the African Union. The Department had also engaged in a vigorous discussion of gender issues. That very week it was to launch a gender resource package for peacekeeping and other field personnel. From the Department's standpoint much had been achieved over the past four years.

7. In August 2005 it would be five years since the launch of the Brahimi process. That milestone should understandably prompt reflection on some fundamental questions. To what degree had peacekeeping changed since then? What would the next five years hold for United Nations peacekeepers and what might be the implications for the approach taken by the United Nations system, DPKO in particular, in developing appropriate preventive measures?

8. Those were the big questions which the Secretariat wished to begin discussing with the Member States, but it was just as important for the Member States to begin discussing them with one another in the lead-up to the summit meeting to be held in September 2005. The report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which was about to be issued, would certainly contribute significantly to that discussion. Without pre-empting the Panel's conclusions or the reaction of the Secretary-General and the Member States to them, he would use the present opportunity to inject into the dialogue certain

trends and realities which seemed to him to be dominating the peacekeeping terrain.

9. First, the present peacekeeping demands throughout the world exceeded the capacity of the United Nations or of any other organization. From the United Nations perspective, the fact that a growing number of international organizations and actors were engaging in post-conflict work was very welcome. Regional and subregional organizations should likewise welcome investment in the United Nations capacity for peacekeeping. The fact that the Department was currently conducting a total of 17 operations, with more potentially on the horizon, was ample confirmation of the indispensability of United Nations peacekeeping. The universality of the United Nations continued to confer a unique legitimacy on its peacekeepers, who had built up considerable experience and expertise over decades of hard work.

10. Second, if the current demand for United Nations peacekeeping remained roughly constant over the next five years, the Organization would be faced with a serious resource deficit in the field. Serious attention must be given to the present pool of human and financial resources available for post-conflict work and an agreement must be reached on reliable bases for their allocation to the United Nations and other operations as and when needed.

11. Third, the persistence of the demand for peacekeeping operations was one of the few predictable features of peacekeeping. As for the rest, the United Nations must be prepared to expect the unexpected. As in the past, operations would have to be mounted at short notice and tailored to each specific situation.

12. Fourth, the complexity of post-conflict transitions meant that the operations must be carried out on many tracks at the same time — political, humanitarian, economic, protection of human rights, security — often in high-risk environments. Many of the tasks related to peacebuilding as much as to peacekeeping, and so the integrated peacekeeping operations had to be linked to longer-term peacebuilding and development activities.

13. Those realities presented DPKO with some difficult dilemmas. On the one hand, the peacekeeping capability had been strengthened, and hard work was being done on many fronts to strengthen it further; on the other hand, the demand for peacekeeping was increasing geometrically in scale and complexity, while resources remained limited. Should United Nations peacekeeping operations be conducted on the scale currently demanded? Were the necessary resources available? What additional measures were needed to increase them further? Or should perhaps the United Nations focus its peacekeeping work on a more limited number of niche tasks? If so, what alternative means were available for meeting the whole range of needs on the ground?

14. The cases of Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo illustrated the complicated situation of peacekeeping operations. In Afghanistan, the United Nations was facing a security challenge which it could not cope with alone. In line with the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report, the Organization had proposed limiting the scope of its mandate to a civilian assistance role. Other actors were better equipped to deal with the security aspects. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, however, there had been no such option. There the Organization required increased forces if it was to establish the basic security needed for support of the transitional peace process.

15. The more the demand increased, the harder it was to find the resources needed for carrying out the mandates of the operations. And it was harder still to find the quality which was so important in specific areas. It was a question not only of finding the gross numbers of mandated personnel or deploying the necessary technical resources but also of finding specific high-demand human resources, including highly qualified specialists.

16. There were thus at least two problems which must be solved as a matter of priority in the coming year. The first concerned the processes by which the Organization obtained the right capabilities, for example the troops, the specialized components, the police, the civilian experts. The second related to the deployment of those capabilities in the field and to the integration and rationalization of the joint efforts of the United Nations system and the rest of the international community to assist with the consolidation of peace.

17. Despite the winding-down of the United Nations presence in Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, the surge in peacekeeping activity in other places over the past year had led to an increase in the total number of United Nations peacekeepers deployed in the field: the number of troops had increased from 32,200 to 54,200; civilian

police from 4,400 to 5,900; and civilian staff from 9,700 to 11,600.

18. The budget of United Nations peacekeeping operations was approaching $3 billion a year, but that figure did not capture the full array of demands waiting on the horizon. DPKO also supported key non-peacekeeping missions led by the Department of Political Affairs. The demand for DPKO services would continue to increase if the Organization deployed missions in Iraq and the Sudan. Five of the 17 DPKO operations had yet to reach their mandated troop strength. There was a shortfall of some 5,400 troops on the ground. Thanks were due to all the troop-contributing countries for their efforts to staff the units fully, but there was still a shortage of highly qualified specialists, including helicopter pilots, communications personnel, special forces, etc.

19. Rapid deployment was another key issue. New options must be explored in order to avoid any future shortfall in rapid-deployment personnel. Such forces were needed to assist with the start-up of new missions and when existing missions were under serious threat. In their current form the United Nations standby arrangements did not allow for the formation of such a strategic reserve. It might be possible to envisage the preparation and holding on standby of pre-trained and equipped units which would remain under the command of the troop-contributing countries pending deployment. Given an arrangement for their rapid deployment to peacekeeping operations, when needed, such reserve units could be sent to the field in operational order and brought under United Nations command. The mere existence of such a standby force would act as a deterrent to spoilers of the peace process.

20. A shortage of specialists with specific skills was also felt in the formation of police units. For example, the Department still needed 960 French-speaking police officers. The challenge was a real one, and thanks were due to a number of countries, including Spain, Cameroon, Senegal, the United States and Turkey, for their assistance in recruiting such specialists. The overall approach to meeting police requirements must also be reconsidered. The lessons of past operations indicated that it was not sufficient merely to train police officers. There must be a sustainable law-enforcement institution to support them and bolster the rule of law on the ground. The Department's approach to the formation of police forces had now changed: with fewer civilian police, the focus had shifted to the recruitment of larger numbers of highly qualified police officers and civilian experts with skills in such areas as policy and planning, police operations, police administration, budgeting, human resources management and logistics, intelligence and information gathering.

21. The backbone of all the Organization's peacekeeping operations was the civilian staff, which supported all the components of a mission and helped to move the peace process forward. The effectiveness of the selection and recruitment of the broad range of civilian specialists needed by today's missions must be improved. That would be a priority for the Department in the coming year.

22. The Department needed to attract, recruit and retain high-quality staff. The conditions of service in the field must be reviewed. And it was imperative to make changes in the use of 100 and 300 series contracts for field staff. He requested support for his proposal to use short-term contracts for persons engaged for time-limited activities and to offer 100 series contracts to persons engaged for six months or longer.

23. Pre-mandate commitment authority had proved a very effective tool for accelerating mission start-ups by funding the deployment of initial civilian and military personnel and purchasing equipment and matériel not available from DPKO stocks. The establishment of the strategic deployment stocks in Brindisi would allow the Organization to provide the logistical support necessary for rapid deployment. There might be a need to re-examine the levels of the strategic deployment stocks, the mix of stocks, and the replenishment mechanisms. The first mission-specific policy and mission-specific planning teams had been created, but much remained to be done in terms of the integration of the planning, support and management of operations.

24. The Department could not and should not duplicate at Headquarters capacities available elsewhere. One of its central tasks in the conduct of operations was to draw the whole system together. The Department might have to be restructured if it was to play its role in unifying the efforts of its partners in the planning, deployment and management of operations.

25. The United Nations Secretariat and its partners could not cope with all the challenges of integration. One of the biggest challenges lay in the funding of the various types of activity. Certain security activities had traditionally been financed from assessed contributions, while reconstruction and development measures had relied on voluntary contributions.

26. The success of post-conflict work depended on how the needs were satisfied on the ground. The Department had developed a concrete policy and procedures for its missions. In consultation with the United Nations Security Coordinator and with the organizations of the United Nations system working in the field, it was developing a unified integrated security-management structure. The aim was to make optimum use of the human resources and technical capabilities of the United Nations.

27. The Department was carrying out 17 operations; it was necessary to continue to maintain the high quality of the existing resources, to ensure their rapid and efficient deployment, and to use the capacities of the United Nations system to the full.

28. **The Chairman** suggested that, since some confidential matters might come up during the further discussion of the information given by the Under-Secretary-General, the meeting should move into closed session.

29. *It was so decided.*

The meeting was suspended at 11.05 a.m. and resumed at 12.55 p.m.

Agenda item 109: Programme planning (*continued*)

Programme 23 of the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007

30. **The Chairman** drew the attention of the members of the Committee to draft resolutions A and B adopted by the Committee without a vote on 21 October 2004. He understood that paragraphs 33 to 38 of draft resolution B referred specifically to the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007. By adopting that draft resolution, the Committee had taken a decision on the changes to be made in programme 23 (Public information) as contained in document A/59/6 (Prog. 23).

31. If the Committee agreed with that understanding, he would inform the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of the Committee, of the decision taken by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on programme 23 under agenda item 109.

32. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.